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ABSTRACT

On December 15, 1975 the Board of Higher Education of the City of New York passed a resolution requiring that all applicants demonstrate on eighth grade reading and numerical competence level to be required for admittance on a full time, matriculated status. In as much as the open admissions policy had the aim of increasing the participation of minority group students in the University, a set of analyses were conducted designed to assess the effects of the new admissions criteria upon the ethnic composition of the University. It was found that 72 percent of blacks, 20 percent of whites, and 65 percent of Puerto Ricans who were admitted in 1971 would have been excluded had the new admissions criteria then been in effect. Under the original open admissions policy in effect in 1971, the ethnic composition was as follows: 18 percent black, 72 percent white, and 10 percent Puerto Rican. If the new policy had been effective at that time, the composition would have been 7.5 percent black, 87 percent white, and 5 percent Puerto Rican. In short the minority group enrollment would have been reduced from about 28 percent to 13 percent. Forty-four percent of those who entered with less than the eighth grade reading level in 1971 had either graduated or were still enrolled in CUNY three years later. There were no significant ethnic differences. (Author/JM)

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EFFECTS OF NEW ADMISSIONS CRITERIA UPON THE ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

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In 1969 the Board of Higher Education approved a policy of open admissions at the City University of New York (CUNY). The policy had several objectives. One of the most significant was the aim of increasing access to the University for minority group students. During the initial year of the policy, the results were evident: The proportion of Blacks (and to some extent Puerto Ricans) enrolling in the fall of 1970 was, for the first time, equal to the proportion graduating from New York City high schools in the previous spring. Ethnic integration of CUNY increased in subsequent years.

For the past several months the University has been faced with a budget crisis of overwhelming proportions. In attempting to deal with the problem, various options have been considered, among them proposals to limit enrollment. On December 15, 1975 the Board of Higher Education passed a resolution requiring that all applicants demonstrate (by performance on a test or other measure) an eighth-grade reading and numerical competence level. Those unable to score at this level would not be admitted to full-time matriculated status.

Inasmuch as the open admissions policy had the aim of increasing the participation of minority group students in the University, we have conducted a set of analyses designed to assess the effects of the new admissions criteria upon the ethnic composition of the University.

The analyses are presented in Tables 1 through 5. Table 1 shows that 39% of Blacks and 31% of Puerto Ricans who enrolled as freshmen in 1971 fell below the eighth-grade level in reading as measured by the CUNY open admissions test. Among Whites, 6% fell below this level. Under the new admissions criteria, these students would not have been admitted to CUNY.

Table 2 shows the proportions below the eighth-grade level on the open admissions numerical competence test. The data indicate that 66% of Blacks, 17% of Whites, and 38% of Puerto Ricans scored below the eighth-grade level.

Table 3 presents the percentages failing to meet the eighth-grade criterion on <u>either</u> the reading or the math test. According to the new policy, students would have to exceed this level on both tests in order to qualify for admission. This table is, therefore, the most critical for assessing the effects on ethnic composition. The findings are striking: 72% of Blacks, 20% of Whites, and 65% of Puerto Ricans who were admitted in 1971 would have been excluded had the new admissions criteria then been in effect.

Table 4 shows the consequences for the ethnic composition of CUNY. Under the original open admissions policy in effect in 1971, the ethnic composition was as follows: 18% Black, 72% White, and 10% Puerto Rican. If the new policy had been effective at that time, the composition would have been 7.5% Black, 87% White, and 5% Puerto Rican. In short the minority group enrollment would have been reduced from about 28% to 13%. If the new admissions criteria are in effect for the fall, 1976 freshmen, the proportions and actual numbers of minority group students in that class will be drastically reduced. The number of whites will also be reduced, but not as profoundly.

One must also consider the academic fate of students previously admitted with less than eighth-grade scores. Table 5 shows these results. They indicate that 44% of those who entered with less than the eighth-grade reading level had either graduated or were still enrolled in CUNY three years later. This table does not show ethnic breakdowns. However, our analyses indicate that there are no significant ethnic differences. The conclusion is clear: A substantial proportion of those who would be excluded under the new policy were, nevertheless, persisting in college.

We are certain that the findings of the above analyses, conducted for the 1971 freshmen, apply as well to subsequent entering classes. These analyses indicate clearly that the new policy will profoundly decrease minority group enrollment among entering freshmen at City University.

Table 1

READING SCORES BY
ETHNIC GROUP

(1971 Freshmen) *

Reading Test Results	Black	White**	Puerto Rican & Latin
Above 8th Grade Level	61% (430)	94% (3694)	69% (316)
Below 8th Grade Level	39% (277)	6% (243)	31% (144)

* Data drawn from a special file containing ethnic and other background data, as well as student test scores and academic performance information.

** Includes Whites, Orientals, American Indians, or other.

Table 2

MATH SCORES BY
ETHNIC GROUP

(1971 Freshmen)*

Math Tests Results	Black	White**	Fuerto Rican & Latin
Above 8th Grade Level	34% (241)	83% (3256)	42% (191)
Below 8th Grade Level	66% (466)	17% (681)	58% (269)

** Data drawn from a special file. See Table 1 for description.

* Includes Whites, Orientals, American Indian, or Other.

Table 3

READING and MATH
TEST SCORES BY
ETHNIC GROUP

(1971 Freshmen) *

Test Results	Black	White**	Puerto Rican & Latin
Above 8th Grade Level on Both Tests	28% (199)	80% (3160)	35% (162)
Below 8th Grade Level On Either Test	72% (508)	20% (777)	65% (298)

* Data drawn from a special file. See Table 1 for description.

** Includes Whites, Orientals, American Indians, or Others.

Table 4

ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF CUNY FIRST TIME MATRICULATED FRESHMEN UNDER DIFFERENT ADMISSIONS CRITERIA (1971 Freshmen)

	Black	White	Puerto Rican And Latin	Total Enrollment
Actual Enrollment	17.7% (6,649)	72.1% (27,084)	10.2% (3,832)	37,565*
Enrollment Using Reading Test	12.6% (4,056)	79.2% (25,459)	8.2% (2,644)	32,159
Enrollment Using Reading & Math Tests	7.5% (1,862)	87.1% (21,667)	5.4% (1,341)	24,870

*Number of students in official CUNY central research data file. Effects of new admissions criteria are extrapolated from our special student file. Percentages in Row 1 closely approximate those in the official CUNY ethnic census.

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Table 5

GRADUATION/RETENTION RATE AS OF JUNE 1974 FOR FRESHMAN CLASS (1971)*

	Below 8th Grade Reading Level	At or Above 8th Grade Reading Level
Graduated or Retained	44.1% (1091)	59.6% (10555)
Not Enrolled	55.9% (1382)	40.4% (7140)

* Data base consists of all enrollees who took the open admissions reading test. Table adapted from an analysis conducted by the CUNY Office of Program and Policy Research.